

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for communicating with electronic postcards comprising:
 - a) providing a server for processing electronic postcards;
 - b) selecting at least one input site remote from the server;
 - c) establishing a verified communication link between the at least one input site and the server;
 - d) providing a sender input device at the at least one input site for receiving input information from a sender, the request including an addressee e-mail address;
 - e) inputting sender information to the input device;
 - f) generating an electronic postcard from the sender information; and
 - g) transmitting the electronic postcard from the at least one input site to the server and from the server to the addressee e-mail address.
- 15 2. The method according to claim 1 including performing said step a) by operating a web site from the server and wherein said step c) includes connecting the at least one input site to the server over the Internet.
- 20 3. The method according to claim 1 including performing said step b) by selecting a gift shop as said at least one input site.
4. The method according to claim 1 including providing a form for recording the sender information and performing said step e) utilizing the sender information recorded on 25 the form by the sender.
5. The method according to claim 1 including performing said step e) by the sender inputting the sender information into the input device.
- 30 6. The method according to claim 1 including performing said step e) by the sender selecting a local scene from a plurality of local scenes stored in one of the at least one input device and the server.

7. The method according to claim 1 including affixing a verified postmark to the electronic postcard, the verified postmark being uniquely associated with the at least one input site.

5

8. A method for communicating with electronic postcards comprising:

- a) selecting at least one input site and storing a plurality of images related to the at least one input site;
- b) providing a user input device at the at least one input site for receiving a postcard request from a sender, the request including a selection of at least one of the stored images, a message and an addressee address;
- c) generating an electronic postcard in response to the user request, the electronic postcard including the at least one stored image and the message;
- d) affixing a verified postmark to the electronic postcard, the verified postmark being uniquely associated with the at least one input site; and
- e) transmitting the electronic postcard to the addressee address.

9. The method according to claim 8 including performing said step b) by selecting a gift shop as the at least one input site.

20

10. The method according to claim 8 including performing said step b) by selecting a location that sells preprinted postcards as the at least one input site.

11. The method according to claim 8 wherein the user input device includes one of a printed form and a computerized terminal.

25 12. The method according to claim 8 including performing said step e) by transmitting the electronic postcard on the Internet.

30 13. The method according to claim 8 including providing the sender with a printed copy of the electronic postcard.

14. An apparatus for generating printed postcards comprising:

- a) a server means located at a predetermined location;
- b) at least one input devices located at an input site remote from said server means for receiving from a sender a postcard request including an addressee address and at least one of a sender message and a scene related to a location of said input site; and
- c) a verified communications connection for selectively connecting said input device to said server means, said input device and said server means being responsive to said postcard request for transmitting an electronic postcard including a verified postmark from said server means to the addressee, said electronic postcard including said at least one of a sender message and a scene related to a location of said input site.

15. The apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said input device includes means for
15 inputting said message as a handwritten message of the sender.

16. The apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said input site is a gift shop.

17. The apparatus according to claim 14 including a plurality of images of scenes
20 stored on at least one of said server means and said input device and wherein said input device permits selection of said scene related to a location of said input site from said plurality of images.